

MOVE!

Coping with Pain

You have indicated that pain may get in your way of being able to do much physical activity. Many people share this situation. Pain is common. Here are several things you may find it helpful to be aware of:



- If your pain is not being treated by your health care provider, it might be helpful to seek treatment.
- Life must go on in spite of pain, and life will be what you make of it. Try to maintain a positive attitude, and make the most of every day.
- People can usually do some physical activity in spite of their pain. Pain that has been going on for a long time is actually often relieved by making yourself move enough to loosen and warm up your muscles, since much of the pain may come from stiffness and non-use. And exercise stimulates the body to produce natural pain killer substances called endorphins. Water exercise classes for people with arthritis are offered at many YMCA's, and are quite helpful.
- If you haven't already talked with your health care provider about how much exercise and what kinds of exercise you can expect to do, it is best to ask about that before doing very much.
- If you haven't been doing any exercise, be sure to start very slow and work your way up.
- Pacing is helpful in managing pain. That means only doing small amounts of activities at one time- spacing your activities out so that you don't "overdo it" at any one time.
- Coping with pain is often helped by support and encouragement from others. Ask for it when you need it. Participating in a pain support group is especially helpful.
- Pain is often made better by doing relaxation exercises. Relaxation tapes are available at most bookstores.
- Self-help books on managing pain are also available at most bookstores and some libraries.